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'S' Novel on Sale in U.S., After Canadian Dispute

By HERBERT MITGANG

Ian Adams, author of "S: Portrait of a Spy," made legal history in Canada two years ago when in a libel case he was ordered by the Ontario Supreme Court to disclose his sources. He declined. What made the \$2.2 million case against him and his publisher remarkable is that "S" is a novel.

This week, the book is being published in the United States by Ticknor & Fields without any changes. As part of the court settlement, a disclaimer was added before the book could be distributed in Canada, where it was held up for three years. The same disclaimer appears in the American edition.

This is the first time in publishing history in which the plaintiff in a case, who contended that he had been libeled because he was recognizable as a fictional character, insisted that his real name be printed in the book. The disclaimer reads:

"All characters in this book are fictional and any resemblance to persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental and in particular, 'S' is not and was not intended to be Leslie James Bennett."

Background of the Story

In New York this week, Mr. Adams, a journalist-novelist, explained the background of Leslie James Bennett:

"For almost 32 years, Bennett has been with the British and then the Canadian intelligence services. Most of the time he was the head of counter-espionage for the security services of

the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and ran the Russian desk — keeping an eye on the K.G.B.," the Soviet Government's intelligence and internal-security agency.

Mr. Adams says in the introduction to his book that Mr. Bennett's career ended after questions had been raised about his loyalty and reported ties to foreign agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency. He was given a medical discharge, left the service and is living in retirement in Australia.

In the novel, "S" is a triple agent involved with the Canadian mounted police, the K.G.B., and the C.I.A. Mr. Adams said that he had not set out to write about Mr. Bennett but, rather, about the mounted police security services — and that sometimes facts and fiction had intertwined.

Why is "S" a novel? "I decided that I could tell more of the truth in a fictional context," the author said.